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INFORMATION
December 23, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

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The main points in response to your request are as follows:

[REDACTED] He is an attractive, active, forty-five year old politician, a Roman Catholic, and does not speak English. He is described by U.S. officials who have dealt with him as more forthcoming and direct than most Korean politicians, a proven vote getter with a persuasive manner and an eloquent, oratorical style. Kim likes to be called the "Kennedy of Korea."

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--Despite the widespread favorable reaction to Kim's opening campaign speeches, his prospects for victory next May appear at this time to be marginal at best. In comparison to President Park's Democratic-Republican Party, the mostly conservative New Democrats are poorly organized and short of money. Moreover, Kim cannot count on even the unswerving support of all of his own party.

--The issue of U.S. troop reductions in Korea appears likely to have only a marginal impact on the election. President Park had opened himself to the charge that he created undue strains in relations with the Americans by his initial strong stand that any cut-back of U.S. troops in Korea at this time would be tantamount to inviting Pyongyang to resume open hostilities. The emotional impact of this issue has by now largely dissipated, however, and the talks on modernizing South Korean forces have helped to recreate an atmosphere of mutual cooperation.

--Kim cannot make too much of an issue of U.S. troop reductions without the risk of offending the nation's 625,000-man military establishment. For Kim to insist that these reductions endanger the nation's security would, at the very least, imply criticism of the country's armed forces, and could expose him to charges of giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

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